DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 842 RE 004 015

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TITLE Individualization of Instruction in a Reading and Study Skills Center with Junior College and/or Open Door Policy Students.
PUB DATE Dec 71
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Tampa, Fla., Dec. 1971
AVAILABLE FROM National Reading Conference, Inc., Marquette University, 1217 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53233

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Change; College Freshmen; *College Programs; College Students; Educationally Disadvantaged; *Individualized Instruction; Learning Characteristics; *Reading Centers; Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; Reading Programs; Reading Skills; *Study Skills

ABSTRACT

The analysis of individual learning styles and the application of the results of the analyses to realistic learning situations are the basic goals of a Wisconsin college reading and study skills program. In the 1-year required program, beginning college students deficient in reading hear a series of lectures on effective study habits, reading skills, and ways of diagnosing and modifying study behaviors. They are given individual help through testing and counseling in the analysis of their own study behaviors. They are shown how to plan effective study schedules and are assisted in finding ways to overcome certain avoidance mechanisms they may have built up. The author ends with a word of caution that instructors in similar programs not be taken in by commercial packaging and programing of materials, but rely on personal attention to student needs instead as a basis of instruction. References are included. (MS)

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"Individualization of Instruction in a Reading and Study Skills Center with Junior College and/or Open Door Policy Students"

(A paper presented at the 1971 annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, December 2, 1971 in Tampa, Florida.)

Abstract

Describes a reading and study skills improvement program designed to meet the needs of a particular population, the "open door" policy student. The assumptions held about these students, the responsibilities of the reading center and the procedures followed in implementing and evaluating such a program are given. The overall theme of the paper is that, despite the general assumptions, programs can be individualized for these students.

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"Individualization of Instruction in a Reading and Study Skills Center with Junior College and/or Open Door Policy Students"

The "open door" policy concept in junior colleges and other institutions of higher education attracts many students from socio-economically deprived environments. This student may rank 99th in a high school class of 99, and he may have very little esthetic motivation for academic proficiency; but he does have a very realistic outlook. Education beyond high school is essential for his own advancement in a very materialistic, real world. "How much education do you have?" This question has been thrown up to the student, to his family, and to his friends. He must have more than completion of high school or he will never leave the economic stale-mate observable with his laboring class neighbor.

This student has generally followed the majority of the rules in school, attended classes, turned in a minimun of assignments, not caused any major

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trouble, and in many cases excelled in some extra-curricular activities in sports or music. Now he applies for college entrance and is accepted.

What can we at the college do? One of the best practices we can follow is a concept currently being funded by the United States Office of Education for individualization of instruction.

Responsibilities of the Reading and Study Skills Center

The Reading and Study Skills Center was established to assist the students who are unable to read well enough to be placed in the regular English classes. These students are assigned to special English classes, an English Laboratory, and the Reading and Study Skills Center.

1. It is a responsibility of the Reading Center to provide these studnets with the necessary skills to obtain at least a functional instructional reading level.

2. The student is exposed to the idea that college reading and study involves complex skills which may be developed through instruction and practice. These skills cannot be seperated from the other communication skills, such as listening, writing and speaking. A multisensory, multifacited approach to learning to learn is employed to implement this concept. The students own texts and assignments are used, as well as specific skill building materials.

3. Since there is a wide range in reading ability, it is impossible to place the students in large groups. Therefore the instructor must be concerned with both inter-intra individualistic differences. Some students need more help in spelling, others in comprehension, others myriads of other skills. To treat these students as a group implies they all need the same skills, at the same levels, at the same time. A gross injustice to the student.

The classes are limited to twenty students per section with at least two instructors and the director available at all times. Although this implies a 1:7 ratio the student receives the 1:1 attention he so desperately needs. (This is described under procedure.) By emphasizing individual diffenences it then becomes possible for the student to ascertain the necessary skills which hopefully make him a much stronger contender for academic achievement.

4. The center assumes the responsibility of accentuating the students' positive accomplishments. This takes precedent over any lack of achievement. Such simple tasks as counting the correct answers, not the incorrect, or congratulating the student over consistent correct usage of a principle in grammar, rather than finding another error, just as glaring, in the same written assignment. A student at this level has already experienced a significant amount of failures. By emphasizing his positive attributes, the instructor helps create a more favorable learning environment.

5. The student is aided toward successful achievement in reading and study skills to his optimal level of academic proficiency. (Optimal level may mean different things at different institutions and with different populations. Therefore, the term, optimal level is used here.) In other words there is no single objective for every student. Some are working at complete frustration levels in their freshmen work and may not remain in college; others appear to be able to use the individualized assitance in adjusting to academic life which is offered to them.

There are a variety of needs demonstrated. Some students don't need specific skills as much as they need positive reinforcement of their capabilities and support from a faculty member.

6. Individualization can be accomplished with approximately the same staff and faculties as group instruction if the personnel is willing to orient themselves toward the following goals:

a) thoroughly knowing the available materials

b) achieving a high degree of flexibility

c) use of properly structured, self-instructional skills materials

d) knowing the tentative potentials of the students

e) being available as a resource person the entire time the student is in the center

f) establishing realistic goals for the students successful completion of the assigned task.

The personnel could be graduate assistants, volunteers from the teacher training program, peers who have demonstrated academic proficiency in a specific discipline or skills area, as well as the regular faculty members.

Schedule

The Reading and Study Skills Center required course is a one year course with classes meeting twice a week during the two semesters. The students may make any combinations of the two periods, but are recommended to try and schedule their classes so that they are taking the course at the same time for both sessions.

Volunteer students may make any combinations and arrangements that are agreeable with their schedules and the personnel of the Reading and Study Skills Center. A sample schedule is given in figure # 1.

Sample Schedule Figure # 1

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	Section 1 - 10:00 - 10:50
"	"	Section 2 - 11:00 - 11:50
"	"	Section 3 - 1:10 - 2:00
"	"	Section 4 - 2:10 - 3:00
"	"	Section 5 - 3:10 - 4:00
TUESDAY	THURSDAY	Section 6 - 9:00 - 9:50
"	"	Section 7 - 11:00 - 11:50
"	"	Section 8 - 1:10 - 2:00
"	"	Section 9 - 2:10 - 3:00
"	"	Section 10- 3:10 - 4:00
"	"	Section 11- 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Please use Section 11 for students that really need the night class. .Section 11 is on Thursdays (one night only - 2 hour session)

FRIDAY	Section 12- 10:00 - 10:50
	Section 13- 11:00 - 11:50

Hours open:

Monday thru Thursday	8:00 a. m. - 12:00 noon
	1:00 p. m. - 4:00 p. m.
Thursday night	6:30 p. m. - 8:30 p. m.
Friday morning	9:00 a. m. - 12:00 noon

The schedule allows the students a great deal of flexibility in relation to their other classes. Another positive feature of the center is its "open door" policy for any student, staff or faculty member. There is a constant flow of volunteers, as well as the student for whom the course is a requirement.

Procedure

Upon attending the first class session the student fills out a registration form. The form contains information about the student, test scores, the student's evaluation of his problems, space for the instructors comments and the eventual evaluation.

All of the students are then given the Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form A. Eventually this test will be left to the discretion of the instructor, but

at the present time it is required. The test is scored and the student has a conference with a staff member to discuss the results. In the majority of cases this is the first time the student has had the opportunity to discuss the results of a standardized test.

The instructor, the director and the student decide if any further testing is necessary. Additional testing may follow at a later date or maybe immediately administered.

A work folder is then made to pursue a tentative outline of desirable areas of skills improvement. The instructor emphasizes the outline may alter frequently depending on the students degree of achievement and the difficulties encountered in the student's regular course work. It is further emphasized that the student is expected to do from three (3) to five (5) activities per class session.

To keep the students actively involved in the learning process, a wide variety of approaches is needed. Most of the students realize their attention span is short and they welcome varied approaches to insure that they have obtained the proficiency of a given skill. The student rather enjoys being responsible for his own learning.

Emergency cases exist where a student needs to discuss a specific problem more than improve his skills, provision is made for the student to forgo the intended material on the days schedule and concentrate on his felt need for a specific course. An example of this might be thus:
A student is having a great deal of trouble with the vocabulary in biology or history, the instructor alters the students material for that session to include the vocabulary, (pronunciation via the language master) definitions by means of a glossary obtained from the discipline area, a copy of the textbook, and handouts or lab notes from the instructor. Instead of a

vocabulary lesson per se the student will have available to him the vocabulary of the subject matter where he is encountering difficulties.

The Reading and Study Skills Center has a fairly representative supply of information concerning every freshman course on campus. This has taken five years to accumulate and to have available in an accessible form for the student.

The center is not a tutoring service, nor a glorified study hall but when a problem arises it is handled immediately and the student is then repatterned toward his original objectives or goals.

The student's work is appraised daily with a written note and suggestions for follow up material. The overall objective may remain the same but the daily goals and objectives may alter in accordance with the learning that is being demonstrated.

Since the student is the one responsible for his own learning, and the instructor merely the facilitator, the resource person and/or the consultant, the student soon becomes quite adept at evaluating whether he needs more time on inference, main ideas, skimming and scanning or some other more specific skill.

The students write notes back to the instructors concerning the work or his progress. These are sometimes quite caustic, even to the point of stating - "Today was just wasted." But more frequently they are on the positive side with comments to this effect - "I feel I need more practice in taking lecture notes."

When the notes or conferences delve too deeply into the areas of the counseling and guidance domain, referral slips are sent and they, in counseling and guidance, send us referrals when problems in the reading

and study skills are deemed essential. (An excellant working relationship exists between the two offices.)

In five years we have grown from a self-contained Reading and Study Skills Center to a more global, campus-wide service. There is an air of studious informal academic achievement and acceptance.

With this approach the instructors have time to work on adapting or adopting materials, to hold short conferences during the class period at every student's carrol, and to be there when needed. Every student receives some positive overt attention during each class session. The reading instructor may be the only communicable link between the students formal academic world of the class room, and the world outside, the world of his peers.

The instructors availability and interest appears to make a vast difference. The overall effectiveness is demonstrated by the student's enthusiams toward self-improvement. In their spare time many students return voluntarily. Some have returned year after year when they have felt the center could help them academically.

Evaluation

Grades

Only two grades are given, Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. To receive a satisfactory grade a student must do three things:

1. Come to class
2. Take the tests we ask him to take
3. Try and do what we ask him to do

The flow chart in appendix A demonstrates the sequential steps from testing to diagnosis, to treatment and evaluation. Keep in mind the evaluation is continuous.

Testing

Formal testing as well as Informal Reading Inventories from material in the Reading and Study Skill Center or from the student's own textbook is used when ever the instructor or the director deem it necessary.

Diagnosis

The instructor discusses the students tests, with the exception of the I Q tests, and indicates to the student the area which should receive the greatest amount of concentration. The other areas of concentration are also discussed and the instructor and student work together to establish realistic goals in fulfilling the void in the student's skills.

Treatment

These goals or objectives are written down and refer specifically to the student. Example: "The student who does not succeed in selecting main ideas from supporting details in _____ _____ series of exercises will _____ _____."

Can the student demonstrate the change that he and the instructor have determined as valuable for him? Example: "The student will demonstrate the ability to select the main ideas from supporting details in certain material."

The third point in the treatment area is a statement of an objective referring to a learning process or behavior and to specific content. In other words an example such as: "Given and assigned chapter from world history, the student who is unable to select main ideas from supporting details with _____percent of accuracy, will after _____weeks of training, be able to distinguish with _____ percent accuracy the main

ideas from supporting details in the World History Text. The student and instructor select the percentages and time allocations.

The student knows where he is heading, what degree of perfection he is striving for, and how he is going to get there.

Students keep detailed charts on their work in the skills materials and in their own text materials. They can see day by day where and how they are achieving and in what skills or discipline area they need more concentration, as well as the degree with which they are reaching their goals.

Evaluation

The charts from the treatment section indicate to the student how well he is achieving his goals and/or objectives. Keep in mind the instructor is continually assisting the student in writing realistic goals for that specific students.

Standardized tests in an alternate form are given at the end of each semester. Many of the students make fantastic gains, others only marginal ones.

At the end of the academic year gains have been made as high as 5 years eight months and as low as two months.

The students are also given the opportunity to evaluate the program and any material they have used. This is a voluntary, unsigned evaluation sheet with space available for any comments.

Success of the Program

Each year a nationally known authority in reading is brought in to evaluate the program. Because of the results of these evaluations the program has been refunded for five years. This past January a proposal

was written for an extention of the project for the next three years. It was approved.

Students that started college four years ago, reading at ninth grade level or below, were in the graduating class of June 1971. Perhaps all the students needed was the kind of help the Reading and Study Skills Center had to offer; perhaps just to believe in themselves and/or to have someone believe in them and of course it required a great deal of back-breaking academic work. But they did succeed!

Summary

There appears to be definate need for an individualized reading and study skills approach. What has been presented is a description of one such program which has been successful not only in the institution where it originated but the director has assisted several other institutions of higher education in planning similar programs for their reading and study skills center.

A list of suggested readings on individualization of instruction in a Reading and Study Skill Center is provided in appendix C.

ERIC Documents related to the teaching of reading are given in appendix B.

The bibliography in preparation of this paper may be worthy of your selective perusal.

It should be noted that the institution be aware of the limitations of federal funds. Allowances for the continuance of the Reading and Study Skills Center should be submitted in the academic budget in the foreseeable future.

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and/or Open Door Policy Students

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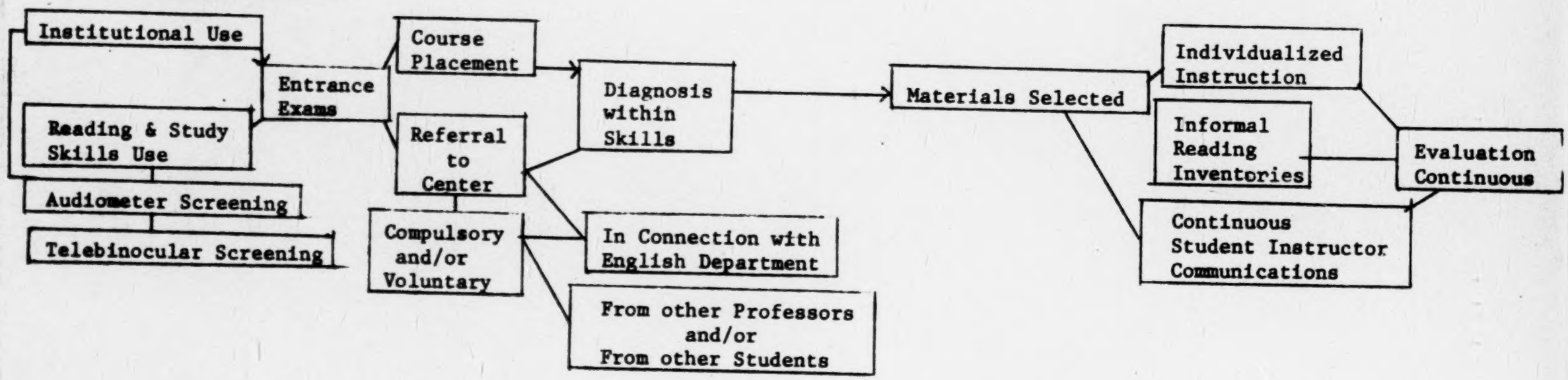
A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE READING & STUDY SKILLS CENTER

KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE, FRANKFORT, KY.

TESTING

- Reading
- Comprehension
  - correlated with Rate
- Vocabulary
- Listening
- Study Skills
- Spelling
- I.Q. - Verbal - Otis
  - Non-Verbal - Lorge Thorndike
- Writing
- ACT Scores
- English Placement



DIAGNOSIS

TREATMENT

EVALUATION

Appendix B

ERIC Documents Relation to
The Teaching of Reading to College Students

Laffey, James - Editor - Current Literature Awareness Service CLASS Volume I - Numbers 1-8, 1970 CCM Information Corporation, 909 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022 with cooperation ERIC/CRIER and IRA

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ED 011 490
An experiment on the effect of motivational appeal vs. techniques upon reading rate improvement in a group of college students

ED 011 491
Vision and college reading -- a review of the literature and report of a survey

ED 011 822
Some factors to be considered in conducting a college-adult reading program

ED 012 214
Application of operant conditioning in a college reading center

ED 013 709
What materials should be used in college reading courses?

ED 013 713
Effectiveness of four methods of increasing reading rate, comprehension, and flexibility

ED 013 733
An evaluation of the University of Maryland Reading and Study Skills Satellite Program

ED 014 401
A Directory of College and University Reading Clinics/Centers in the United States, 1966-67

ED 015 852
Why bother to teach critical reading skills to college reading classes?

ED 015 853
The reading improvement programs in Florida Institutions of higher learning 1966-67

ED 016 570
Combining a program of reading improvement with the sutdy of history

ED 016 572
Tutoring -- an aspect of clinical procedures in a college reading laboratory

ED 016 584
Review of research in college-adult reading , 1967

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ED 017 427
Some relationships between values and reading gains in college programs

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ED 020 877
Providing clinical services in reading -- an annotated bibliography

ED 022 654
Effects of reading, sutdy skills improvement, and reduced credit load on achievement and persistance of failure prone college freshmen: a pilot study

ED 024 548
Current practices in college and adult developmental reading programs

ED 024 557
College-adult reading instruction. Perspectives in reading, no. 1

ED 025 745
Reading instruction for college level foreign students

ED 028 309
A bibliography of documents selected from RIE on Higher Education

ED 029 753
College reading instruction: past, present, and future

ED 031 368
The SR/SE Laboratory; a systems approach to reading/study skills counseling

ED 031 374
Who asses reading status and progress, tests, teachers, or students?

ED 037 320
Study skills for the severely retarded college reader

ED 031 385
The effect of specialized developmental reading and study skills instruction and counseling on a sample of students with above average quantitative and below average verbal skills

Appendix C

Suggested Readings

Individualized Instruction Reading and Study Skills Centers

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